of recruitment. The Member then referred to the Education Department and said that the distribution of appointments in that department was far from equitable. There was no settled principle to regulate appointments in the higher ranks of the service. The Member regretted that the authorities differed in regard to the relative importance of Indian and European degrees. The recent order of Government that only unmarried women be entertained in the educational service of the State was another matter for regret. Referring to the Survey Department, the Member said that the work of the Survey Assistants caused serious hardship to the people. In regard to the Judicial Department, the Member thought that there was a great deal of corruption in the lower ranks of that Department and especially in the execution branch of it, and that the existence of such corruption was quite inconsistent with the dignity of the department. Touching the Departments of Agriculture, Forest and Industries, he observed that his only suggestion in respect of those departments was that they should be made to do something for the real benefit of the people. The Member concluded his representation with the request that, in the administration of the affairs of the State, the Government might take the people into their confidence to a greater extent than at present.

101. Periodical examinations for recruiting the best local talent for higher service.

Mr. S. Subbaraya Aiyar (Member, Municipal Council, Haripad) began by remarking that it was admitted on all hands that Travancore was the foremost State in all India in point of education and that it was only natural that new ideas should come in with such education. Though Travancore was hedged in between the sea and the Sahyadhri hills, it was not totally shut out from the rest of India, and the ideas of duty, patriotism and ambition to rise in the service, swaying the people of British India, were permeating the hearts of the sons of Travancore also. It was therefore disappointing to them to see that they were practically denied opportunities to rise to the highest office in the State. The Member referred to the circumstance that within recent memory Travancore never had a permanent native Dewan except in the persons of Messrs. Nanoo Pillai and Shungrasubbaier and examined in detail the reasons that could be alleged for that strange phenomenon. He refuted the argument that the British Government could not place confidence in native Dewans, and argued that, if they could be satisfied with one native Dewan, they could assuredly repose confidence in another, provided he was duly qualified. Many big offices in British India, he pointed out, were held by Indians. Citing the instance of Mr. Shungrasubbier who was nominated a member of the Madras Legislative Council after his retirement, the Member said that the charge of lack of intelligence could not be brought against Travancoreans. As there were no communal riots or disturbances in Travancore, it would, he said, be wrong to allege that native Dewans would not be able to hold the balance even between caste and caste. The chief reason for the present regrettable state of affairs in that respect was, in the Member's opinion, the denial of opportunities for them to rise to the height of their manhood. Foreign Dewans despised native talent and did not care to encourage it or bring up the sons of the soil. He criticised the present nature of the public service under which every graduate or graduate-in-law had to begin from the lowest rung of the ladder with the result that they became quite unfit in the end to be entrusted with higher and more responsible work. Merit, he said, was not being recognised, but service alone was taken into consideration in the matter of promotion. In addition to the above defects, there was, he observed, no proper selection of hands for the public service. To remedy the present state of affairs he suggested the introduction of a competitive examination and the recruitment of the first two or three successful candidates to the *cadre* of Division Assistants on probation for 2 or 3 years on a pay of Rs. 200. After a period of ten years' service they should be deputed to study, at first hand, the administration of British India in the several departments. The Member said that he was sure that by such means Travancoreans could be trained to occupy the highest office in the State.

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Dewans' reply.—Gentlemen who spoke about the public service so far.

I am not sure whether I was wise in reserving my answer to the end of the speeches on public service to-day, because I find that, in these speeches there is a mixture of an enunciation of general principles and suggestions, some of which are valuable and require the attention of the Government with accusations against the heads of departments and Government. Some of the speakers were very eloquent but not dispassionate while the others thought more dispassionately and tried to analyse the situation and to go to the bottom of it. Of one thing I am glad, namely, that some at least of the members that have spoken have realised the immense difficulty of the subject. Leaving verbiage and flowery language apart and leaving for the present accusations, it seems to me that the general discussion has centred round a few basic principles. In the first place, I find that there is a general objection to foreigners. Next, I find it stated that there is no principle observed in regard to promotions. I also find it stated that there is no principle observed in regard to punishments. I further find it stated that the rule and practice in regard to extension of service are both objectionable and that again there is no principle underlying them. It has also been stated that there is no principle in regard to recruitment, by which I take it you mean initial recruitment.

Coming to the question of foreigners, it is true that there are foreigners in the service of Travancore, and it is also true that at the head of many a department there are foreigners. It is natural that the people of Travancore should feel that at the head of all these departments there should be Travancoreans and it is perhaps a legitimate desire. But let us look facts in the face. One or two members were good enough to mention that the presence of these foreigners is not the result of the work of one day or one year. They are here, for good or for evil, as a result of an age-long policy—I do not know whether we may call it a policy—as a result of actions taken by a long line of administrations in the past. Well, let me ask you to put yourselves in the position of these foreigners. Some of them are occupying important positions and I understand you to say that the work of everybody is not unsatisfactory and that some of these foreigners are trying to do their work forgetting the fact that they are foreigners and trying to promote the interests of Travancore. Now, what is the solution that you offer ? The solution mentioned is: "Send them away, give them proportionate pensions or retire them or send them away somehow". I shall deal with the question of retirement later. Your suggestion is: "Send them away, give them proportionate pensions or do something with them". Well, I consider that it is hardly fair to ask a responsible Government to send away a body of their servants—persons holding responsible positions in the country—unless they are satisfied in the case of individual officers that they do not deserve to be there. It is a question of deciding each case by itself. I do not think that any responsible Government—any Government which has any common fairness as the bedrock of its policy—can accept the policy of sending away people who have served that Government, and served it well.

Recruitment of foreigners, I grant, is a matter which is different in its nature. In this connection, when one of the members—I think it was Mr. B. Krishna Pillai—said that each Dewan brought in his train all his kith and kin and established them in Travancore, and that the people were now suffering from the results of these actions, I asked him : "Mr. Krishna Pillai, will you kindly give me instances of the kith and the kin brought by the present Dewan and established or planted here in Travancore ? " ; and Mr. Krishna Pillai said : "Yes, that is exactly what I am going to point out". But in the rest of his speech I did not hear a single instance mentioned of that kind of thing having been done during this administration, nor am I aware of the existence of any such instances. Government fully agree with you in thinking that foreigners should not be brought into Travancore unless there is a very indisputable justification for it. That being granted and that being the policy of the present Government—and I claim that that is the policy which the present Government has been steadily and faithfully pursuing—I am entitled to ask you : "Is not some credit due to this Government for pursuing that policy ? " And am I not fair in telling you that all that you can ask this Government in return is to persist in that policy? This Government—at any rate so long as I am the Head of the Administration here—will persist in that policy.

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The next thing is that there is no principle in regard to promotions. There again, the Government is accused of lack of policy ; but in the speeches that I have heard, I have not seen any attempt at the enunciation of a consistent policy. Some members say that promotions should not be denied to people who have put in long service. Others say that promotions should be given on the ground of efficiency alone. I would ask, which is the principle that the Government should follow? At the same time I may tell you that the Government have been following a principle, namely, that of promoting men of seniority in service combined with merit and character, so far as Government are able to make out merit and character. It was mentioned by more than one member that character is very important. Government are absolutely in agreement with that statement. But how are we going to decide whether a man has a good or a bad character? Some members say : "You must decide that question by the mere reputation of the particular officer". I can conceive of cases where the reputation of an officer is so bad, that some evidence in support of that reputation would justify action being taken against him. But it is only fair to say that, as regards an officer, generally, whether he be a responsible officer or a low subordinate, if there is no satisfactory direct evidence or at least circumstantial evidence to show that he is not possessed of proper character, the Government would be doing an injustice in punishing him or removing him. They might, perhaps, in certain circumstances debar him from promotion or expedite his disappearance from service. But to punish him severely with dismissal requires evidence of a much more substantial character. I believe that to be the principle followed all over the civilized world. You give the criminal a chance of proving his innocence and give him the benefit of the doubt. I do not see how a different principle could be applied in the case of public servants. I do not pretend to say that that principle is observed invariably by the instruments of Government. It is not possible for Government to always give previous instructions or to prevent abuse of such instructions. Nor is it necessary for the members of this house in order to satisfy Government about the real character of particular Government servants to proclaim from the house-tops that such and such an injustice has been done by them. Members can go to the responsible officers of Government and to me and give information quietly of their knowledge of injustice done, and such information, if definite, could be taken and action started. I was very glad to hear from the first speaker—I believe it was Mr. Padmanabha Pillai, the Member for the Padmanabhapuram Municipal Council—I was glad to hear from him that, although out of modesty as he put it he would not mention names here he would privately place before me substantial facts to prove his statements. I welcome his offer.

I have spoken about promotions and punishments. I must once again tell you that, in regard to the question of foreigners, assuming that it is wrong to have so many foreigners in the service of the country in responsible positions, it is an evil which could not be remedied in a day or in a year or even in a decade. It is a thing which could be achieved only gradually. You cannot right a wrong by committing another wrong. As I have already said, it is very natural for Travancoreans to think that their self-respect suffers by the presence of foreigners in large numbers in the service. That wrong can be rectified only gradually. It cannot be righted by denying to deserving public servants what they are fairly entitled to.

In regard to recruitment, I admit that we have not yet laid down a policy but Government have proper justification for not doing so. During the two years in which Government were busy with reorganisation and retrenchment, no recruitment worth mentioning was made. It is only a year since recruitment was recommenced, and Government have issued instructions to their departmental heads to recruit on certain principles. It is time, now, for Government to examine whether departmental heads have carried out those instructions faithfully. One member suggested that Government should obtain returns of appointments made by heads of departments, quarterly, half yearly or at least annually. I may tell the House that I have prescribed annual returns. I have the annual returns for 1098 before me which explain in some detail the nature of appointments made by heads of departments. If, after an examination of them and obtaining such further information as may be required, the Government find that recruitment is unsatisfactory—perhaps it

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is unsatisfactory if one judges by the representations that have been made here—then it would be time for the Government to devise a more satisfactory way of recruitment to the public service.

Gentlemen, the last thing dealt with was extension of service. A good many members have spoken about extension of service, and they have spoken very strongly. But all of them forget the fact that, in the recent alteration of the rule, the retention of officers up to 60 as a matter of course has been confined to officers whose duties do not involve any responsible, administrative or executive work, *i. e.*, officers or clerks or subordinates who do only routine work. It is such people, the rule lays down, that may be kept till 60, unless they are found physically unfit. Opinions may differ. But Government after an anxious consideration have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to increase the pension charges by sending away people who, in spite of the fact of their having become older than 55, would still be in a position to carry on their routine duties satisfactorily. No order is final in the sense that it cannot be reconsidered and the Government can still reconsider it, if necessary.

In regard to responsible administrative and high officers, it is more by way of an exception that an extension is granted. It is not the rule. I doubt whether, as regards the reasons adduced in individual cases, there would be agreement or unanimity. In each case, if it is taken up and examined dispassionately, reasons could be adduced which would convince any fair-minded tribunal that extension was not given as a matter of personal favour or for the sake of the particular individual concerned. The members who spoke want that no discretion should be used at all and that every high officer should forthwith be retired as soon as he attains 55 years of age. That is a proposition that can scarcely be conceded.

I have now dealt with the general discussion. Some statements were made in the course of the speeches which amounted to attacks on Government and the heads of particular departments. I think, in fairness to the Government which I represent, I must say that these statements are far from correct. I asked the particular gentlemen who made these statements, whether they could support them by specific intances. One gentleman said that he had no specific instance to support his statements and was ready to withdraw them.

Another gentleman mentioned a few instances, and some of these instances I had better examine.

To start with, in regard to the Government, it was stated that the present Government was lacking in policy, and that was illustrated by the alleged ineptitude of departments like the Department of Industries and the Department of Agriculture. I do not see where policy comes in here. I do not claim perfection as regards either of the departments mentioned. I would respectfully ask the member who made that allegation to say who are the people that constitute these departments. Are they not mostly, if not all, Travancoreans ? Does he mean seriously to say that these gentlemen, who are highly qualified and who are natives of Travancore, are lacking in their sense of dutyland in a genuine desire to make the working of both these departments a success ? Is it not showing a certain want of sense of proportion in expecting departments like Agriculture and Industries to produce results in a year or two—results which could not be expected in a generation or even in two generations ? That is the experience of people who have been working in other countries. To expect these departments to produce, within a couple of years, results which could not be produced even in a decade or two, is, I think, exhibiting a certain want of sense of proportion.

As regards the pay of Professors in the Arts College, it was mentioned that the pay of the Professors was reduced just at the time when two Travancoreans were about to be entertained as professors—rather one as a Professor and the other as an Assistant Professor. The speaker said that it was done by Government deliberately and he also characterised it as a scandal. The justification for this is the belief of Government—you may or may not believe it—that the pay of the Professors would stand a reduction in these days of an ample supply of young men with high qualifications and especially in view of the fact that the pay of provincial

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Professors of similar qualifications has been fixed equally low in Madras where public services are generally more costly than Travancore. It was thought that, for the age and length of service of these two officers and the experience and qualifications they possessed, it would be a fair start—a decent start. If Government's intentions are going to be characterised as scandalous, I have nothing more to say than that I have become, by this time, accustomed to Government's intentions being deliberately misunderstood and misrepresented. The speaker said that two other persons who are Brahmins were going to be appointed on a higher scale of pay, and his authority for that statement was some newspaper report. It was open to the member to see the Chief Secretary or me and ascertain the real facts.

Then coming to the several departmental heads, the speaker took up the Sanitary Commissioner's office and said that all the clerks there are Brahmins, because the Sanitary Commissioner is a Brahmin, and that that is proof positive of nepotism or favouritsm. He also referred to the reply given to an interpellation in the Legislative Council on the subject. I am sorry that the speaker should have carefully avoided reading out the remarks contained in the answer to the interpellation. It is true that all the staff in the Sanitary Commissioner's office consists of Brahmins. That is stated in the answer itself. The question is why these clerks should all be Brahmins. Here is the explanation. In connection with a vacancy caused by the transfer of the head clerk Mr. Nilacandan Tampi, as Assistant Sanitary Officer, the present head clerk had to be appointed. He was not newly introduced into the office ; he has been in service since 1084. As regards four other clerks they were appointed between the years 1072 and 1079, *i. e.*, more than 20 years ago. I do not think that the present head of the Sanitary Department was the head of the department then. As regards five other clerks, when the Government reduced the strength of the vaccinators, these vaccinators had to be appointed as Sanitary Officers' clerks, and were eventually promoted to the Sanitary Commissioner's Office according to merit, qualification and service. You will thus see that none of these people were newly introduced into the department recently and the bulk of them were probably not introduced by the present Sanitary Commissioner. To say that because the present Sanitary Commissioner is a Brahmin, he is responsible for his entire clerical staff consisting of Brahmins, is, I am afraid, opposed to facts and is unfair to that officer.

As regards the P. W. D., it has been stated that some overseers who were occupying a particular place in the Quarterly Civil List and who are non-Brahmins were put below some Brahmins in the Civil List on a subsequent date. The fact is that they were put down, not at the instance of Mr. Natesa Aiyar, the present Chief Engineer, but by Mr. Everard, the late Chief Engineer, for reasons which must have carried conviction. After the present Chief Engineer was appointed, one of these men has had a promotion. Then, the case of Mr. Rama Variar, Superintendent, was mentioned. As regards Mr. Rama Variar, if he had his promotions in the usual course, he would not be drawing Rs. 125 which he now draws. He would be drawing much less. He should consider himself lucky in having got Rs. 125 before his *confreres*, and the argument that, because he got it, he should further supersede his seniors is a violation of principle, which Government think is unfair.

Then, the case of Mr. G. V. Subrahmania Aiya was mentioned, and it was stated that the Chief Engineer Mr. Jacob wrote about him saying that he was corrupt and all the rest of it, in connection with the Kuzhittura Bridge. The speaker was not charitable enough to say when that case occurred, and what was the upshot of the case. The case occurred seven or eight years ago during the days of my predecessor. It was examined by the then Government and the Government came to the conclusion that the charges were not substantiated and so he was honourably exonerated. Charges may be brought against innocent persons as well as guilty persons.

It was also mentioned by the same gentleman that Mr. G. Krishna Pillai has been superseded by Mr. O. S. Sundaram Aiyar. I do not think any such thing has taken place. Well, Gentlemen, I have thought it fair to myself and to the Government I represent to show, how these statements, which on the face of them are likely to create an adverse impression, are really uncharitable and far from correct.

The Assembly adjourned at 5-12 P. M.

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